

DAY OF SILENCE

(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the National Day of Silence, which is coordinated nationally by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, and organizes students across our country to take a vow of silence for the day to highlight the bullying and harassment that many LGBT youth encounter in their public schools.

I am proud to join Congressman ENGEL from New York to introduce a resolution today in support of the goals of the National Day of Silence, and I will continue to work in this Chamber to raise awareness about this ongoing problem.

I ask that the House now join me in observing a moment of silence for LGBT youth who are victims of harassment and violence in cities and towns all across this country, and as a symbol of our commitment to guarantee that every child in America can study and learn in a safe environment.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DICK FALLOW

(Mrs. BUSTOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BUSTOS. I rise today to talk about the recent passing of Dick Fallow, a great friend to working men and women of the Quad-City region of Illinois and Iowa and a great ally to American workers.

Dick spent his life fighting to improve the lives of others. He was a tireless and a passionate advocate for working families and a true champion for civil rights.

As a young man, Dick served his country by driving an ambulance in World War II. Later, in the 1960s, he fought for civil rights legislation.

He is best known for being a lifelong local and national leader on behalf of the American worker. He showed up at every labor rally, picket line, and civil rights event. Rain, snow, heat, old age, and sickness, nothing could deter Dick Fallow from fighting on behalf of working people.

He was a rousing public speaker and inspired generations of Illinoisans and Iowans to get involved in public service. He also was a devoted and loving family man.

I know my husband, Gerry, and I join so many others in extending our deepest condolences to Dick Fallow's family. He will truly be missed.

REAL TAX REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. Speaker, this is a conversation about something that's very pertinent to all Americans right now, and that is their taxes. Obviously, this is tax week, which was punctuated by an incredibly difficult day in Boston.

But this is also tax freedom day that's happening April 18. It's a recognition that if Americans worked their entire year they could get to this point. For many areas of the country, this would be the day they're finally paying into their own family, rather than paying into the Federal Government or the State and local Treasury.

Now, that differs from area to area, but this shows, again, the significance of what it really means to get to a point like this where we have to look again at our Tax Code.

Today is the day just to be able to pause and say: Where are we with our Tax Code, and where are we with our budget?

Let me just highlight a couple of things. Then I have several colleagues that I want to get a chance to yield the floor to to get a chance to continue this conversation.

There's a lot of conversation about our budget, rightfully so. We're over \$1 trillion overspending this year, the same as we did the year before, the year before, and the year before. Now, for the fifth year in a row something has happened that's never happened ever in American history. We've overspent the budget by \$1 trillion.

Let me set aside something else, though, for people to be able to look at, and that is, this year, in the Federal Treasury, we will receive the highest amount of tax revenue ever in the history of the United States Treasury. Make sure no one misses that. We'll receive more revenue this year than we ever have in the history of the United States Government. Yet, we're still overspending \$1 trillion.

We have serious budget issues, but they're not tax revenue as far as how much is coming in issues; it's overspending. But our issue with taxes is not the issue of the tax rate not necessarily having enough. It's the issue of how we do it.

It's such a convoluted mess to be able to go through our thousands and thousands of pages of Tax Code. We need to stop and be able to evaluate this: Is this really the right way to do it?

The purpose of tax action is to tax the smallest amount possible to run an efficient government. Is that really what we're doing in our Tax Code right now?

Is it a simple system that people can actually do? If so, why do people spend billions of dollars across America, and millions of hours, trying to fill out tax forms, and to be able to get it in on time in a way that's so complicated that when you turn it in, no one thinks that they actually turned it in correctly. No one.

So the challenge of this is, how can we get to real tax reform to be able to

solve many of the tax issues, to be able to benefit our Nation and what happens in the days ahead, and especially for our businesses that need so much help and would like to have the relief of the burden that they have to go through all this convoluted tax policy.

Let me introduce one of my dear friends. This is TOM REED from New York. He's a member of the Ways and Means Committee. They live and breathe and function with the Tax Code, and he is one of the leaders of trying to walk through the process of reforming this code.

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Oklahoma for organizing this important topic and this conversation tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in an America that is fair. I believe in an America where the rules are simple, so that hardworking taxpayers in America understand what those rules are, and they're not subject to the jeopardy of violating the rules because they're too complicated.

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I believe in an America where it's not judging a person by whom they know but, rather, who they are. And, Mr. Speaker, why I start my conversation with those beliefs is because we need to apply those beliefs to getting rid of this broken, complicated Tax Code that we have in America. What we have is a Code that is not simple, that is not fair, that is way too complicated. That's why I believe in going through commonsense tax reform for the purposes of coming up with a simple, fair, and reasonable Tax Code so that people can fill out their own taxes.

As my colleague from Oklahoma rightfully points out, people are spending billions of dollars on tax preparers, third parties, and millions of hours—that can otherwise go to their businesses or to their families—to fill out a tax return that they can't understand because the rules are too complicated.

Also, we have to end what we came here to Washington, D.C., to do, my colleague from Oklahoma and myself of this freshman class in November, 2010, and that is having our country under the control of the special interests and creating those loopholes in the Tax Code that go to narrowly tailored people because of whom they know.

We want a Tax Code, I want a Tax Code, and I know my colleagues on the Ways and Means Committee want a Tax Code that promotes growth, that promotes economic opportunity, that promotes the opportunity for us to be competitive on the world stage. Because when America competes on a world stage in a competitive market, we win. We have the best workers. We have the best technology. We have freedom. We have the rule of law. We need to do commonsense tax reform for the purposes of putting us in a position where we can create the jobs today and for generations to come, because we will then create a fair, level playing